Smart Growth Policy and the Environment

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Defining Smart Growth

According to the American Planning Association, smart growth:

"refocuses a larger share of regional growth within central cities, urbanized areas that are already served by infrastructure."

"reduces the share of growth that occurs on newly urbanizing land, existing farm lands and in environmentally sensitive areas."

The Goals of Smart Growth

1. Land protection from development
2. More compact cities
3. Reduced auto dependence
4. More walking and less obesity
5. More transit usage
6. Reduced energy consumption
7. Reduced spending on infrastructure
8. Reduced isolation of poor and minorities

Some National Organizations Advocating Smart Growth

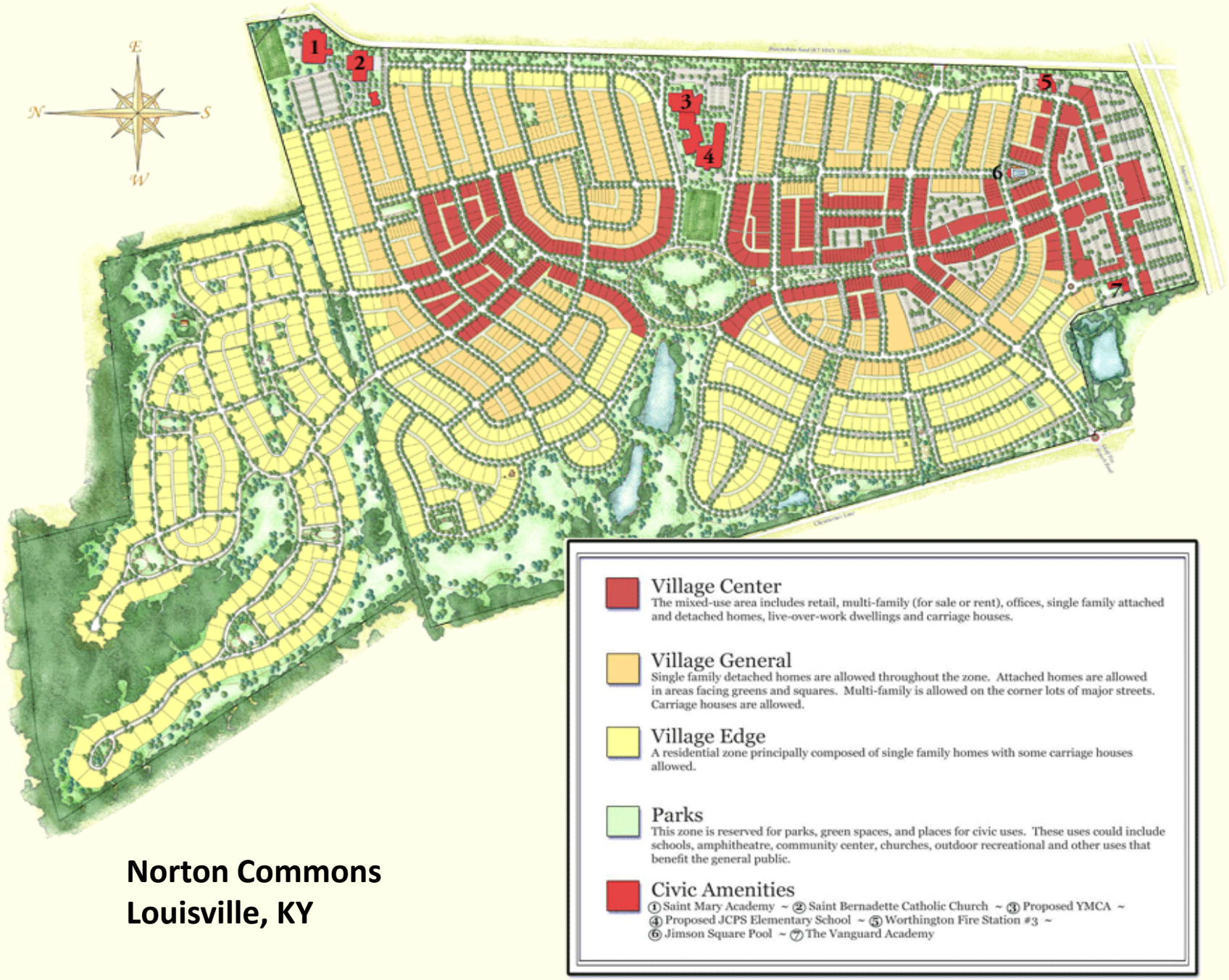
- Sierra Club
- Congress for the New Urbanism
- Smart Growth America
- American Planning Association
- Mayor's Institute on City Design
- National Brownfield's Coalition
- HUD's Sustainable Communities Initiative

Themes of Presentation

- The smart growth movement is changing urban policy and planning
- It is promoted by economic, demographic, and political concerns as well as environmental concerns
- It is successfully rebuilding the inner city
- The trends behind smart growth are not likely to change

Some Common Policies Advanced by the Advocates of Smart Growth

1. Urban growth boundaries
2. Purchase of development rights
3. Transfer of development rights
4. Zoning for smaller lots, e.g., row houses
5. Transit oriented development
6. Infill development
7. Brownfield development
8. Rehabbing of buildings
9. Mixed use development—office, residential, retail combined



Norton Commons
Louisville, KY

Norton Commons – Village Center Buildings (Residential/Commercial)

Is New Urbanism Smart Growth?

- It calls for mixed use, transit, high density, and retail at the center.
- However, a small study of New Urbanism developments in Kentucky, Indiana, and Ohio found that:
    1. only 40% served by transit
    2. 30% were green field projects
    3. 25% more than 5 miles from a city

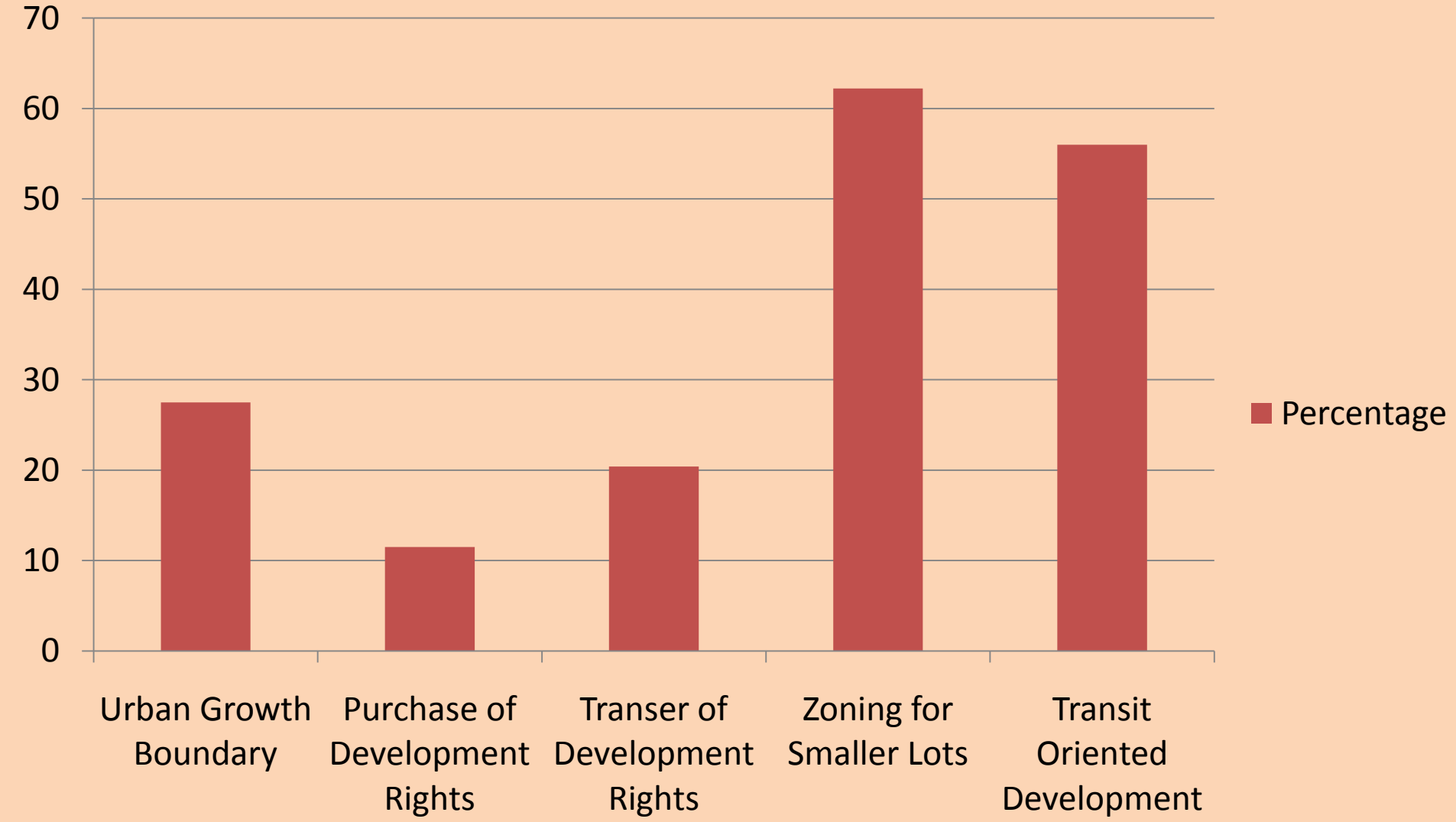
Study of Smart Growth Policy Adoption in U.S. Cities

1. 2003 survey of planning officials in cities of 50,000 and up in 26 states
2. Two types of states: 13 with mandatory comprehensive planning in 1992 and 13 without
3. 202 cities of 340 filled out surveys

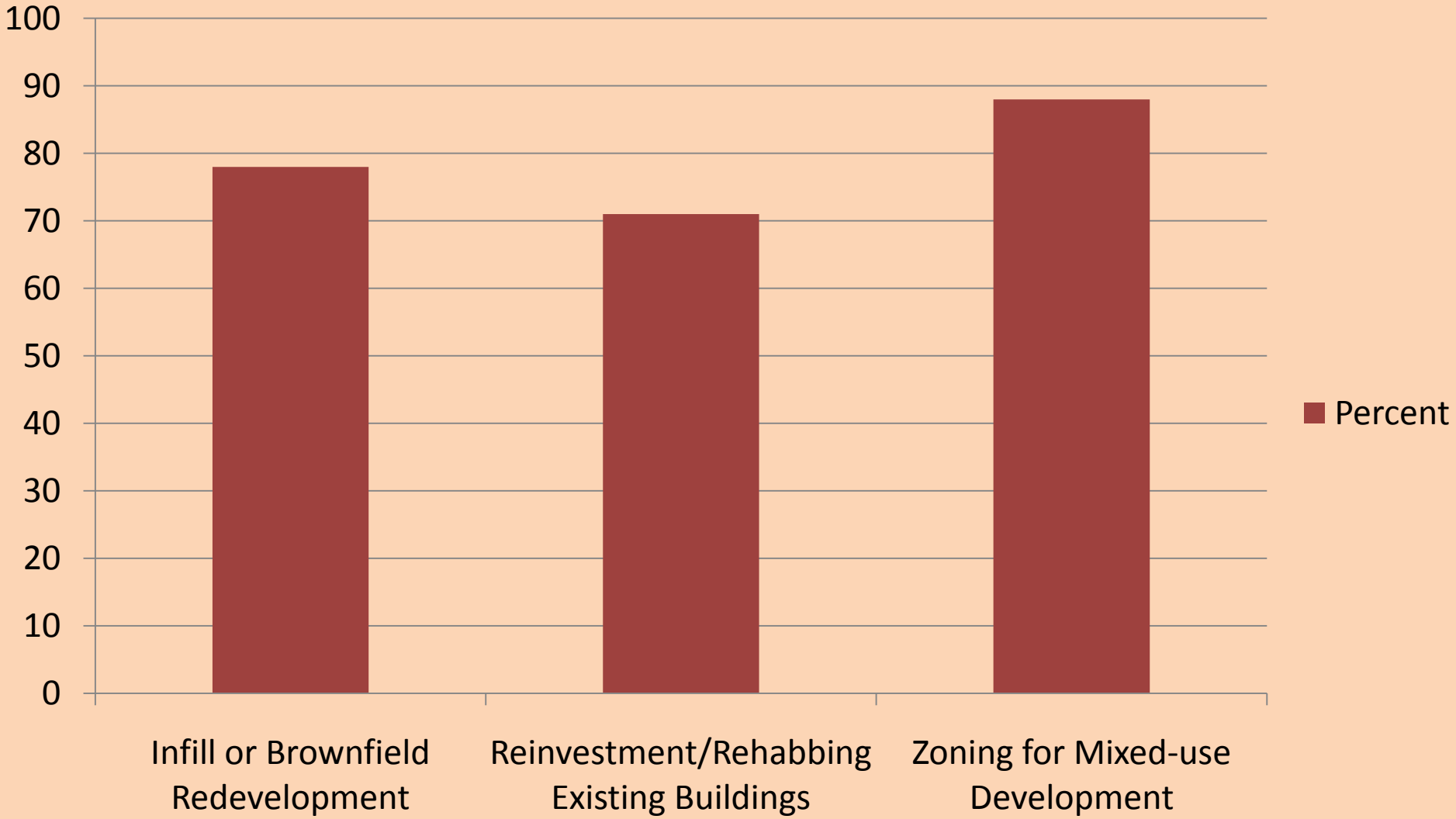
Survey Designed to Obtain Information on the Following

1. The percent of cities with specific types of smart growth policies
2. The percent of cities in which specific social actors were actively supporting smart growth
3. The percent of cities in which specific social actors were opposing smart growth
4. The social and demographic factors that predict the adoption of smart growth policies

The percent of cities with specific types of land preserving policies



Percent of cities with specific types of inner-city redevelopment policies



Cities in States with Mandated Comprehensive City Planning are significantly more likely to have:

- Urban growth boundary—
  32% compared to 18%
- Transfer of development rights—
  25% compared to 12%
- Zoning to encourage smaller lots—
  67% compared to 53%
- Encourage transit oriented development—
  65% compared to 40%

Percent of cities in which specific social actors were actively supporting smart growth

1. Elected Officials—57%
2. Local Newspaper—34%
3. Neighborhood Associations—44%
4. Business Groups—17%
5. Smart Growth Groups—45%
6. Other environmental groups—53%
7. Non-business civic groups—25%
8. Other—12%

Percent of cities in which specific social actors were opposing smart growth

1. Elected officials—15%
2. Local newspaper—5%
3. Neighborhood associations—11%
4. Business groups—10%
5. Developers and real estate interests—33%
6. Property rights organizations—20%
7. Groups representing workers—1.5%
8. Banks and financial institutions—2%
9. Organizations of property owners—9%
10. Other—5%

Smart Growth in Practice

1. Smart growth emerges from the adoption of specific land use and development policies.
2. Cities rarely pursue redevelopment and land protection with equal intensity.
3. Cities differ markedly in the number of smart growth policies they adopt.
4. Some smart growth policies appear to be motivated by economic as well as environmental considerations

The social and demographic factors that predict the number of land preserving policies

1. Number of types of supporters
2. Comprehensive planning mandate
3. Population
4. Percent of population with a college degree

The social and demographic factors that predict the adoption of inner-city redevelopment policies

None of the variables was significant

Environmental Changes Making Inner-City Residence More Attractive

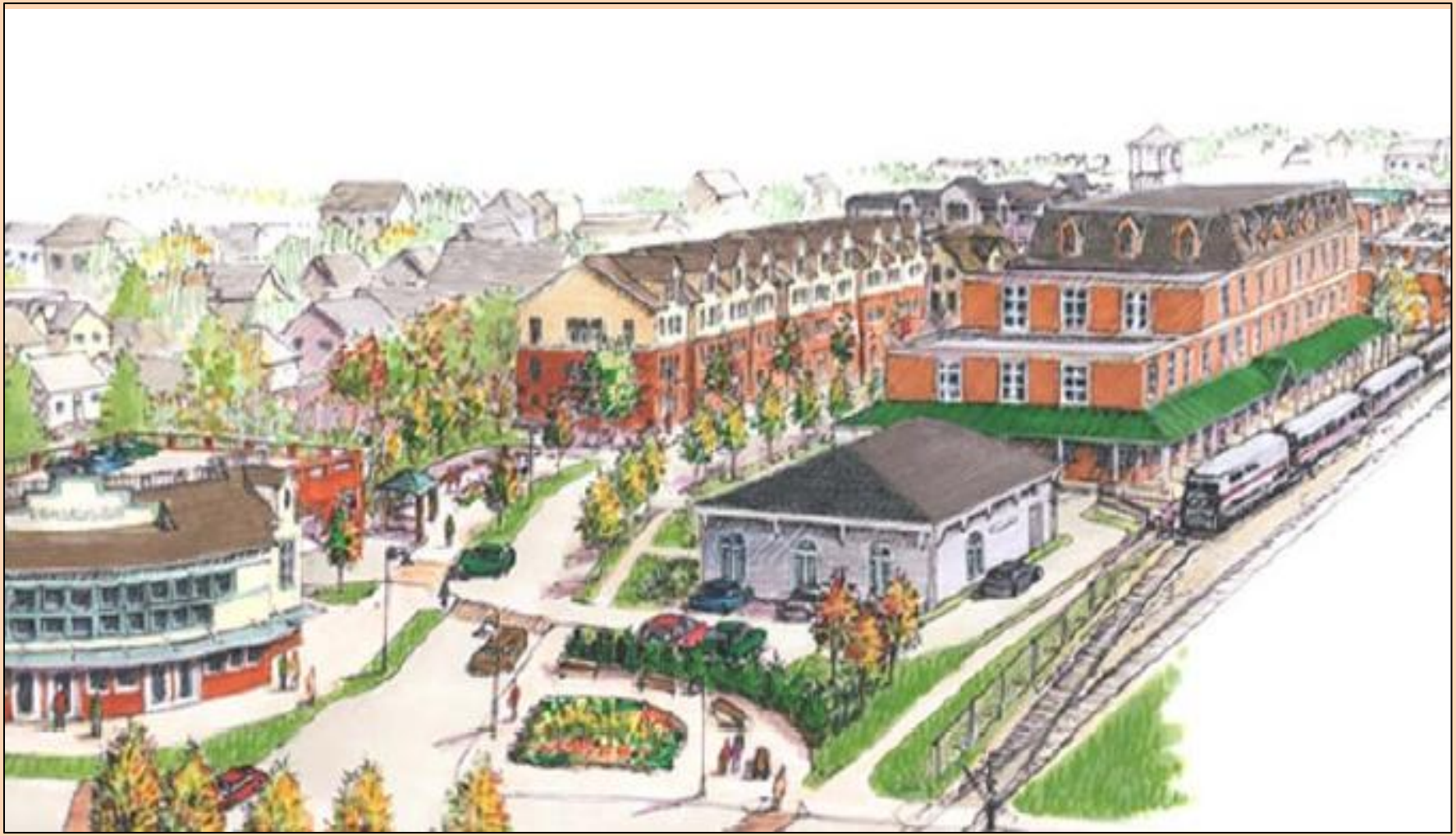
1. Air pollution is down
2. Air conditioning
3. Manufacturing, warehousing, and trucking moved out

Demographic Changes Making Inner-City Residence More Attractive

1. DINKS (Double Income No Kids)
2. Late marriage
3. Small families
4. Aging of population

Policy Changes Making Inner-city Residence More Attractive to Middle-class

1. High-rise projects being torn down
2. Section 8 housing subsidies move poor minorities to inner suburbs
3. Upsurge in imprisonment for street crimes
4. Crime control with cops and cameras
5. Laws promoting Historic Preservation
6. The development of light rail systems and TOD



Rendering of Proposed T.O.D. in Maine

Economic Changes Making Inner-city Residence More Attractive to the Middle Class

1. Rising gas prices
2. Traffic congestion
3. Condominium conversion

Changes Promoting Land Protection

1. Rise in the percent of the population with a college education
2. Public concern for the environment
3. The internet fosters the formation of local smart growth and environmental groups
4. The national environmental movement
5. State laws requiring comprehensive planning by cities

Some Signs that Sprawl is Slowing

1. Between 1992 and 2003, states with a comprehensive planning mandate added 2.22 residents per newly developed acre, while states without added only 1.27 residents per newly developed acre.
2. The percent of housing starts that are for single family detached homes has fallen compared to townhouses, condos, and rental apartments.
3. Central cities obtain a rising share of residential building permits compared to their suburbs
4. For example, Chicago had a 7% share of building permits in 1990-95 and 45% in 2008
5. The average share of all central cities rose from 6.7 to 18.9

Example of Transit Oriented Development

Some Slowdown in the Rate of Increase in Lane Miles of Arterial Roadways

1. Between 1980 and 1990, we increased lane miles of arterial roads by 29.8%
2. Between 1990 and 2000, the increase was 8.2%
3. Between 2000 and 2008, the increase was 7.7%

Percent of Residential Construction for Single Family detached

1. In 2001, 71% of starts for new units were single family detached
2. In 2008, 59% of starts for new units were single family detached
3. So, in 2008, 41% of starts were either town houses, condos, or rental apartments

The Emergence of Light Rail Systems

1. The U.S. has 15 Rapid Transit Systems (think subways and elevated).
2. The three most travelled are N.Y.C., Chicago, and D.C.
3. The U.S. has 34 light rail systems (think street cars).
4. Since 1990, 21 cities have created light rail systems.
5. Since 1990, only one city (L.A.) has added Rapid Transit.

Smart Growth Movement will Reduce Driving Mileage Because:

- More people will live in inner city and close-in suburbs relative to outer suburbs
- More transit oriented development
- More access to light rail and other transit
- More walking/biking in mixed use areas
- Reduced development of arterial roadways and limited access highways

Smart Growth will Reduce Energy Usage for Heating Because

1. More people living in row houses
2. More living in apartments
3. More living in condos
4. Single family detached built as infill will not be McMansions or on large lots

Questions

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The study of smart growth policies can be found in the July 2009 Journal of the American Planning Association